

I am writing in support of SB#5283 regarding funding for agriscience programs in Connecticut. Agriscience programs are truly hidden gems of Connecticut education. Ag programs offer hands-on learning, leadership opportunities and real-life work experience coupled with robust academics. Students build leadership skills through FFA involvement, work experience through the SAE (supervised agriculture experience) and academic skills through a variety of core and elective classes designed with each student's specific goals and interests in mind. The FFA motto of *Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve* captures the values which drive these wonderful programs and the impact that the ag programs have on students' lives.

Connecticut's ag programs provide exciting, challenging and diverse opportunities for students lucky enough to attend. Unfortunately, LEAs must currently pay tuition for students to attend their local agriscience programs, limiting the number of students towns will send and creating a disincentive for guidance staff to even suggest the programs to potential applicants. One of the important pieces of SB #5283 is the elimination of the sending town tuition requirement.

As the parent of a 2016 Nonnewaug Agriscience grad (now a UConn Animal Science graduate who loves her career in the horse industry) and an educator myself for more than 35 years, I enthusiastically support the mission and execution of our wonderful agriscience programs and strongly encourage the funding equitability and other financial supports proposed in SB #5283.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

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